

WILLINGHAM BUCKINGHAM GROSS PEPOY

VERTIGO

F A B L E S

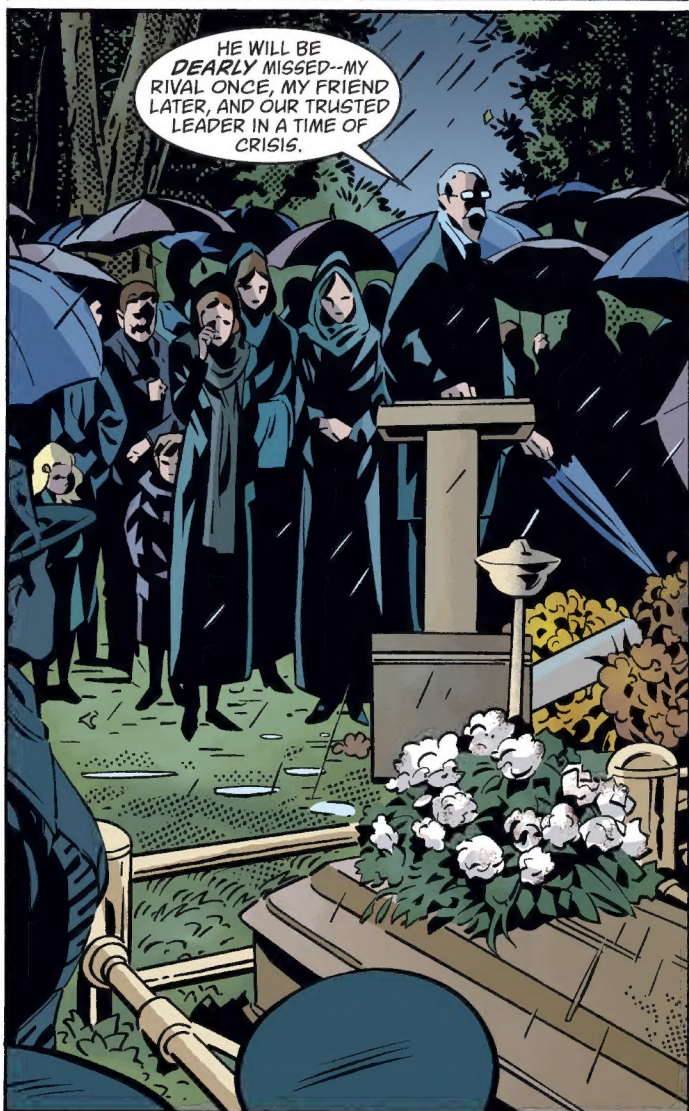
No. 79



Feb 09

suggested for  
mature readers  
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# FABLE-TOWN UN-BOUND

## Chapter Three of THE DARK AGES



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AS THE ONLY ONE OF PRINCE CHARMING'S EX WIVES WHO COULD BE HERE TODAY, I GUESS IT FALLS TO **ME** TO SPEAK FOR EACH OF US.

LET'S BE **CANDID** ON THIS DAY OF ALL DAYS, WHERE ABSOLUTE TRUTH SHOULD HAVE ITS MOMENT. HE WAS, AS WE ALL KNOW, AN ACCOMPLISHED **RAKE** AND WOMANIZER.

HE DEFINITELY HAD HIS TROUBLES WITH MARITAL AND ROMANTIC FIDELITY.

IN THIS UNTIDY LITTLE CORNER OF THE UNIVERSE, WHERE SO MANY OF US WERE REPUTED TO BE "THE FAIREST IN ALL THE LAND," **NONE** OF US WAS ENTIRELY SAFE AROUND HIM.

BUT HE WAS A BETTER MAN THAN I EVER GAVE HIM CREDIT FOR, AND A MORE HONORABLE MAN THAN HE EVER GAVE **HIMSELF** CREDIT FOR.

HE WAS PERSONALLY BRAVE-- MOST OF THE TIME--AND A SKILLED, COURAGEOUS AND AUDACIOUS MILITARY LEADER **ALL** OF THE TIME.

I DON'T THINK I CAN BE ACCUSED OF HYPERBOLE WHEN I SAY THAT FABLETOWN CONTINUES TO **EXIST** TODAY BECAUSE HE WAS WITH US OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS.

HE WAS HERE WHEN WE **NEEDED** HIM, IN OUR MOST UNCERTAIN HOUR, AND GAVE THE LAST FULL MEASURE OF HIMSELF FOR EACH OF US.

ULTIMATELY, WHAT GREATER THING COULD BE SAID OF **ANY** MAN, LIVING OR DEAD?

AT THE SAME TIME,  
THE KNIGHTS OF  
MALTA HOSPITAL...

NURSE?  
NURSE!

THE SECRET  
FABLES-ONLY  
CLINIC ON ITS  
TOP THREE  
FLOORS.



WHAT DO YOU  
WANT, MR. BLUE?  
WHAT DO YOU  
NEED THIS  
TIME?

CAN'T  
YOU SEE  
WE'RE  
UNDER-  
STAFFED  
TODAY?



EVERYONE'S UP AT  
THE FARM FOR THE  
MEMORIAL  
SERVICE.

I--

OF COURSE I WASN'T  
ALLOWED TO GO. NO, I  
HAD TO STAY HERE  
AND NURSEMAID  
YOU.

I  
DON'T FEEL  
WELL.



IT'S TO BE EXPECTED. YOU'RE  
RECOVERING FROM A MAJOR  
OPERATION. GETTING BETTER  
TAKES TIME, SO YOU CAN'T  
BE A BABY ABOUT  
IT.

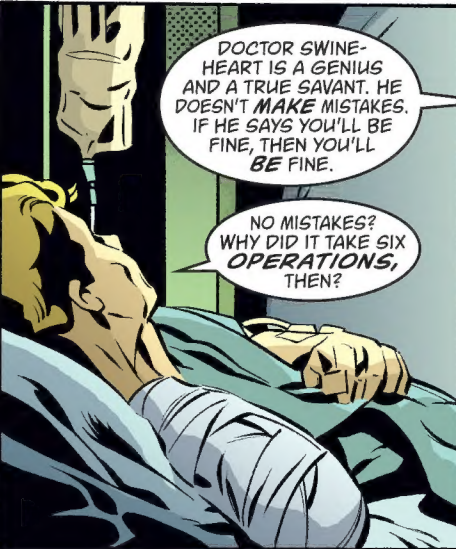
NO, IT'S  
NOT MY MISSING  
ARM. NOT THIS  
TIME, IT'S--

--WHATEVER  
WAS HARMING MY  
ARM, I THINK IT'S  
INSIDE THE REST  
OF ME NOW. I FEEL--

NONSENSE,  
MR. BLUE.

DOCTOR SWINE-  
HEART IS A GENIUS  
AND A TRUE SAVANT. HE  
DOESN'T MAKE MISTAKES.  
IF HE SAYS YOU'LL BE  
FINE, THEN YOU'LL  
BE FINE.

NO MISTAKES?  
WHY DID IT TAKE SIX  
OPERATIONS,  
THEN?



AND IN A WORLD,  
MANY WORLDS  
DISTANT...

I'M SORRY,  
GENTLEMEN. AS MUCH  
AS I DEARLY ENJOY YOUR  
COMPANY, I SIMPLY CAN'T  
STAY LONGER.

THE SPELL  
OF UNBINDING IS  
COMPLETED AND DOING  
ITS WICKED WORK. TIME  
FOR ME TO MOVE ON TO  
OTHER PRIORITIES.

ONE  
MUSTN'T PUT  
OFF ONE'S VENGEANCES  
FOR TOO LONG, OR THEY  
BECOME STALE AND  
BLAND.

ABANDON  
YOU? NO, NOT  
ENTIRELY.

IN A WAY  
I PLAN TO TAKE YOU  
WITH ME.

WHAT AM  
I DOING?

WHAT  
DO YOU  
MEAN,  
WHAT AM I  
DOING?

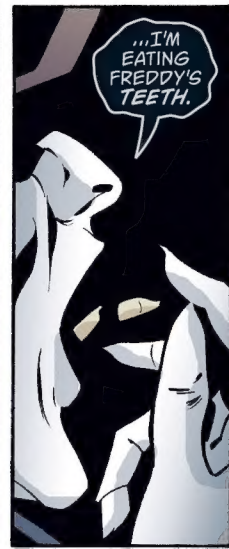


YOU FORGET YOURSELF, SIR. REMEMBER WHO I AM. I'M **MISTER DARK**.

AND I DO WHATEVER I WANT, **WHENEVER I WANT**.



AND IN THIS CASE...



...I'M EATING **FREDDY'S TEETH**.



DON'T WORRY **MOUSE**.

I'LL GET TO YOU WHEN I'M DONE WITH HIM.



WHY?

OH, I SUPPOSE I COULD SAY HAVING A FEW STONY THINGS IN THE GULLET AIDS IN ONE'S **DIGESTION**.

AND THAT MIGHT BE TRUE ENOUGH. BUT YES, YOU'VE CORRECTLY GUESSED I'VE **OTHER USES** IN MIND FOR YOUR GRINDERS AS WELL.



INHUMAN? DEAR BOY, WHOEVER SAID I WAS **HUMAN?**



BACK AT THE FARM...

YES, MORE AND MORE I'M CONVINCED THERE WASN'T AN ACTUAL EARTHQUAKE.



BUT THAT STILL MEANS SOMETHING DAMNED ODD HAPPENED IN THE BUSINESS OFFICE, AND I'M DETERMINED TO FIND OUT WHAT.

YOU DO THAT, SWEETIE. TAKE YOUR MIND OFF--WELL--

WELL WHAT?

IT'S JUST THAT YOU WERE CRYING PRETTY HARD BACK THERE FOR A WHILE.



IT WAS A FUNERAL. I ALWAYS BAWL LIKE A LITTLE GIRL AT FUNERALS AND WEDDINGS. SO WHAT?

OKAY, IT'S JUST THAT--I MEAN HE WAS INCREDIBLY HANDSOME AND, WELL, HE DID TRY HIS LUCK WITH JUST ABOUT EVERY WOMAN IN FABLETOWN, AND--



AND SUDDENLY YOU'RE WONDERING IF I BETRAYED YOU?

I NEVER SLEPT WITH PRINCE CHARMING. PERIOD!



AND I NEVER FOR A MOMENT THOUGHT YOU DID, HONEY, ONLY--WELL, YOU WERE AWFUL SAD.

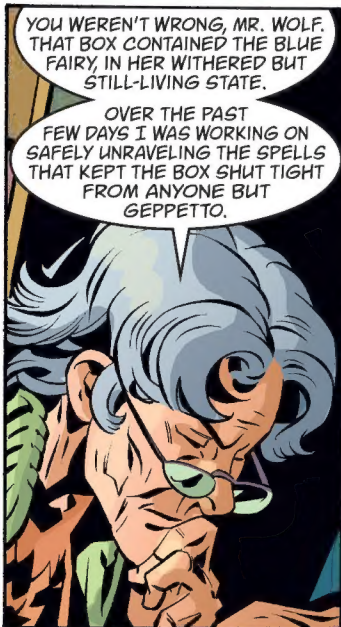
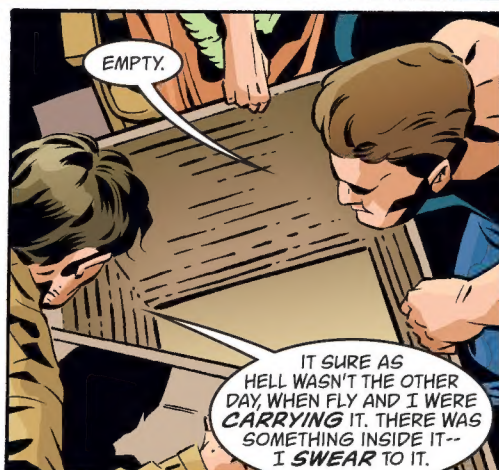
THE WOODLAND,  
THE NEXT  
MORNING...

ARE YOU  
**FEELING**  
OKAY, FRAU  
TOTENKINDER?  
YOU LOOK A BIT  
DISTRACTED.

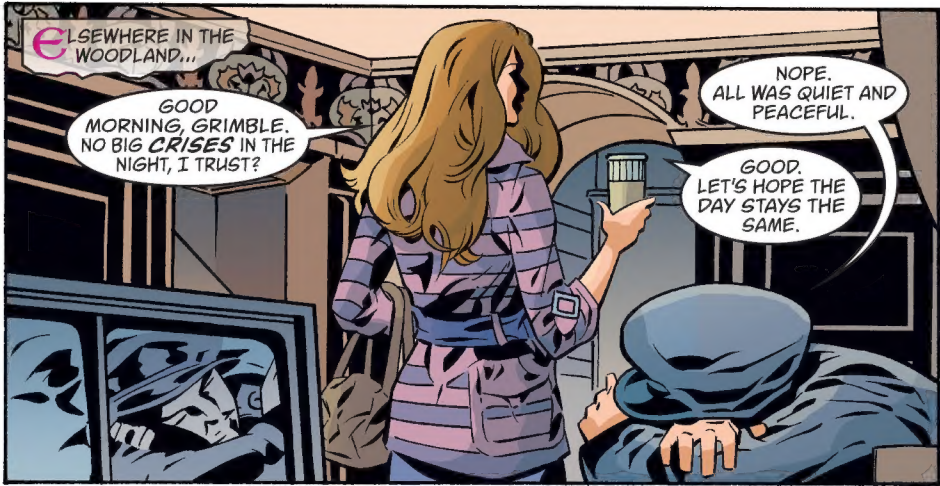
NO, YOUNG  
MAN, ALL OF A  
SUDDEN I'M FEELING  
VERY MUCH **NOT**  
OKAY.

SOMETHING  
BAD IS  
OCCURRING.

WHERE?







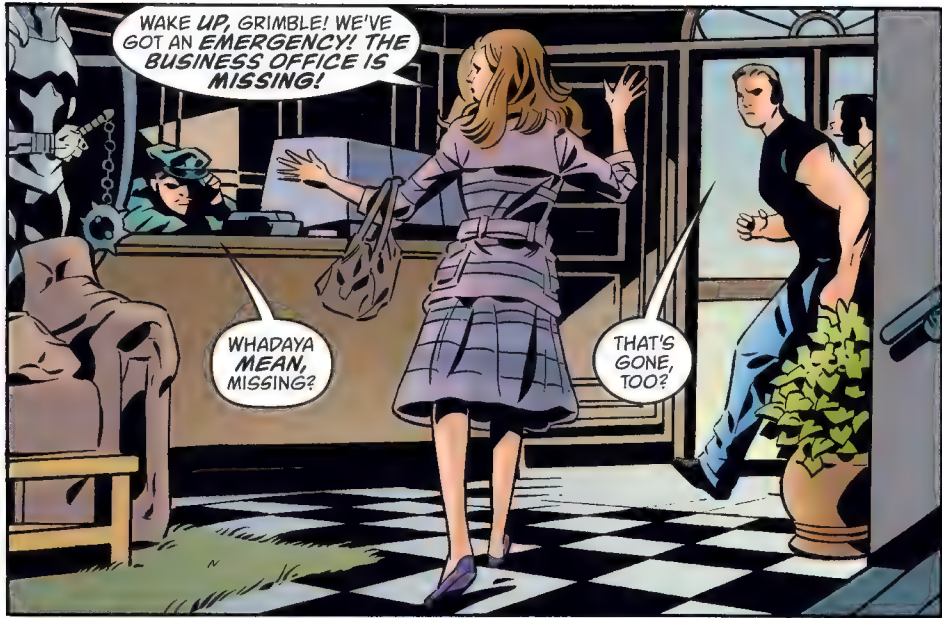
BUSINESS OFFICE



ON,  
HARBINGER!

WE'VE MANY  
DARK LEAGUES TO  
TRAVEL, ERE WE  
REST!





WAKE UP, GRIMBLE! WE'VE GOT AN EMERGENCY! THE BUSINESS OFFICE IS MISSING!

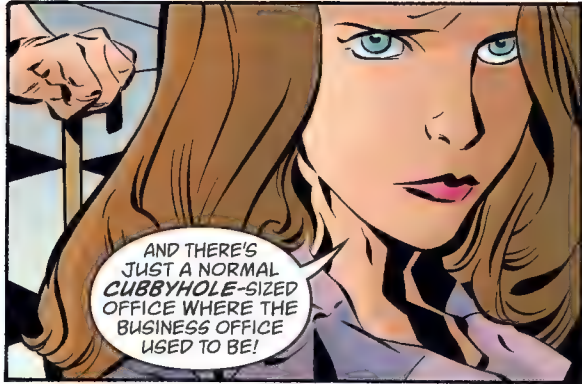
WHADAYA MEAN, MISSING?

THAT'S GONE, TOO?



"GONE TOO!?" EXPLAIN "GONE TOO!"

BIGBY AND I WERE JUST UP IN BLUEBEARD'S OLD APARTMENT. BUT HIS CASTLE IS NO LONGER INSIDE OF IT. THERE'S JUST A NORMAL UNOCCUPIED APARTMENT THERE NOW.



AND THERE'S JUST A NORMAL CUBBYHOLE-SIZED OFFICE WHERE THE BUSINESS OFFICE USED TO BE!



BECAUSE THE SPELLS BINDING THEM BOTH TO THE WOODLAND BUILDING HAVE BEEN CANCELLED.



MEANING WHAT, EXACTLY? THEY NO LONGER EXIST?

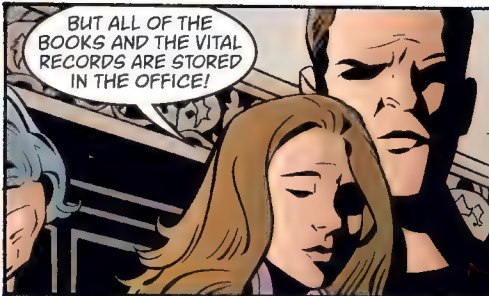
OF COURSE THEY STILL EXIST. BOTH PLACES WERE NEVER ACTUALLY HERE, BUT THEY WERE TIED TO THE WOODLAND BY STRONG ENCHANTMENTS.





BOTH THE BUSINESS OFFICE AND BLUEBEARD'S CASTLE ARE SOMEWHERE, PROBABLY STILL WHEREVER THEY WERE ALL ALONG.

WE JUST CAN'T GET TO THEM ANY LONGER.



BUT ALL OF THE BOOKS AND THE VITAL RECORDS ARE STORED IN THE OFFICE!

NOT TO MENTION THE VAST PILES OF DANGEROUS MAGIC CRAP THAT WE KEEP THERE!



THEY'RE LOST.



AND BLUEBEARD'S TREASURE ROOMS? GONE TOO, I SUPPOSE.

KING COLE'S GOING TO HAVE A **STROKE** WHEN HE HEARS THIS.



IT'S WORSE THAN THAT. ALL OF THE **BINDING** SPELLS IN THE AREA HAVE COME OR ARE COMING UNDONE.

BUT MOST OF OUR PROPERTIES WERE BUILT **INCLUDING** SUCH SPELLS, WEREN'T THEY? DIDN'T I HEAR THAT FROM SOME-ONE?



YOU DID. THEY WERE. WHICH MEANS **NONE** OF OUR BUILDINGS ARE STRUCTURALLY SAFE ANYMORE.

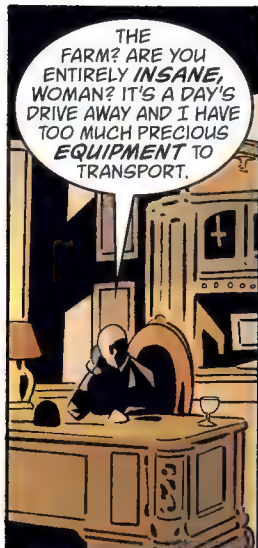
WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT EVACUATING THE WOODLAND, **ALL** OF BULLFINCH STREET-OH, AND OUR SPECIAL FLOORS AT THE HOSPITAL.





EVACUATE THE HOSPITAL? THAT'S A **RIDICULOUS** NOTION! WHY WOULD I CONSIDER DOING THAT?

AND WHERE WOULD WE **GO**? WHERE COULD WE TRANSFER MY PATIENTS?



THE FARM? ARE YOU ENTIRELY **INSANE**, WOMAN? IT'S A DAY'S DRIVE AWAY AND I HAVE TOO MUCH PRECIOUS EQUIPMENT TO TRANSPORT.



HAS SOMEONE PUT YOU UP TO PLAYING A PRACTICAL JOKE ON ME? I WARN YOU NOW, I FIND SUCH THINGS HIGHLY **IMPRACICAL** INDEED!



...OF ALL THE **RIDICULOUS** BUREAUCRATIC **BLUNDERS**!

DOCTOR SWINEHEART? IS SOMETHING **TROUBLING** YOU?

NOT **NOW**, NURSE SPRAT! GO FIND A PATIENT WHO NEEDS CARE!



**GOOD** NEWS, MR. BLUE. DID YOU MENTION YOU MISSED THE FARM?



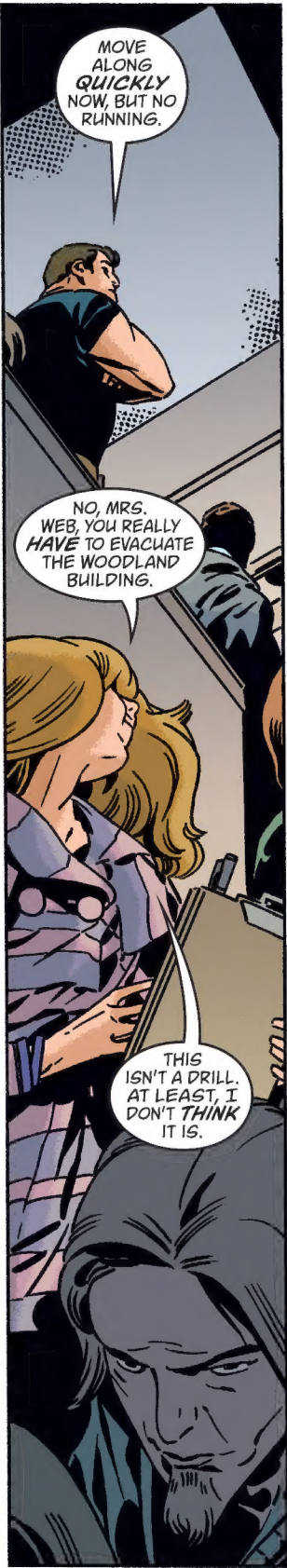
WELL, WE'VE DECIDED TO SEND YOU **UP** THERE THIS AFTERNOON.

ARE YOU SURE I'M WELL ENOUGH TO BE DISCHARGED?

I DON'T KNOW IF THE NURSE TOLD YOU, BUT I DON'T **FEEL** VERY GOOD.



WE'LL FIX THAT, STARTING WITH A LARGE DOSE OF FRESH AIR. DO **WONDERS** FOR YOU.



MOVE ALONG QUICKLY NOW, BUT NO RUNNING.

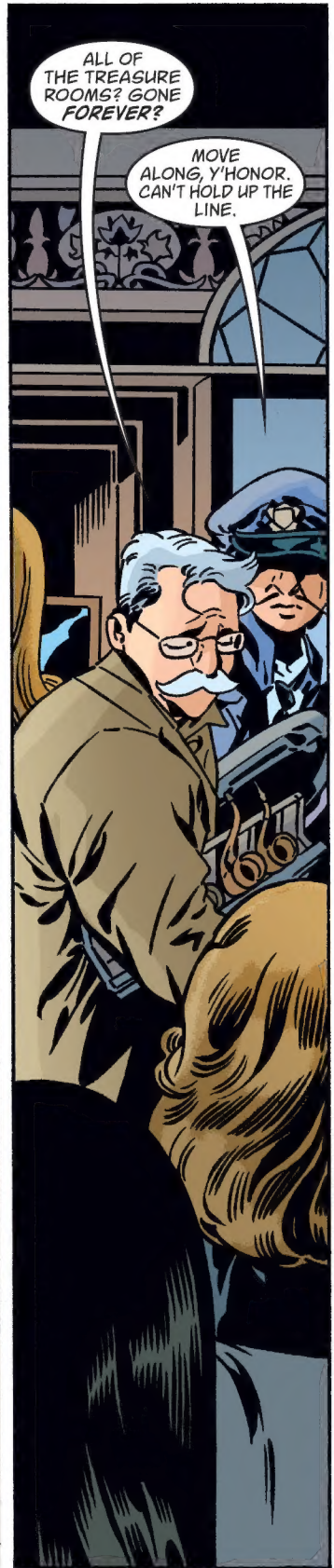
NO, MRS. WEB, YOU REALLY HAVE TO EVACUATE THE WOODLAND BUILDING.

THIS ISN'T A DRILL. AT LEAST, I DON'T THINK IT IS.



QUIT WASTING TIME TRYING TO GATHER UP ALL YOUR POSSESSIONS. TAKE ONLY THE ESSENTIALS FOR NOW.

WE CAN MOVE OUT THE REST OF THE STUFF LATER-- I HOPE.



ALL OF THE TREASURE ROOMS? GONE FOREVER?

MOVE ALONG, Y'HONOR. CAN'T HOLD UP THE LINE.



NOW WHAT?

NOW I GUESS WE WAIT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

YOU KNOW THIS HAS TO BE A FALSE ALARM. THESE BUILDINGS ARE SOLID.

EXCEPT THAT WE FORTIFIED EACH ONE OF THEM WITH STRONG ENCHANTMENTS. THAT MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE SHORT-SIGHTED OF US.

I WARNED YOU SOMETHING LIKE THIS MIGHT HAPPEN.

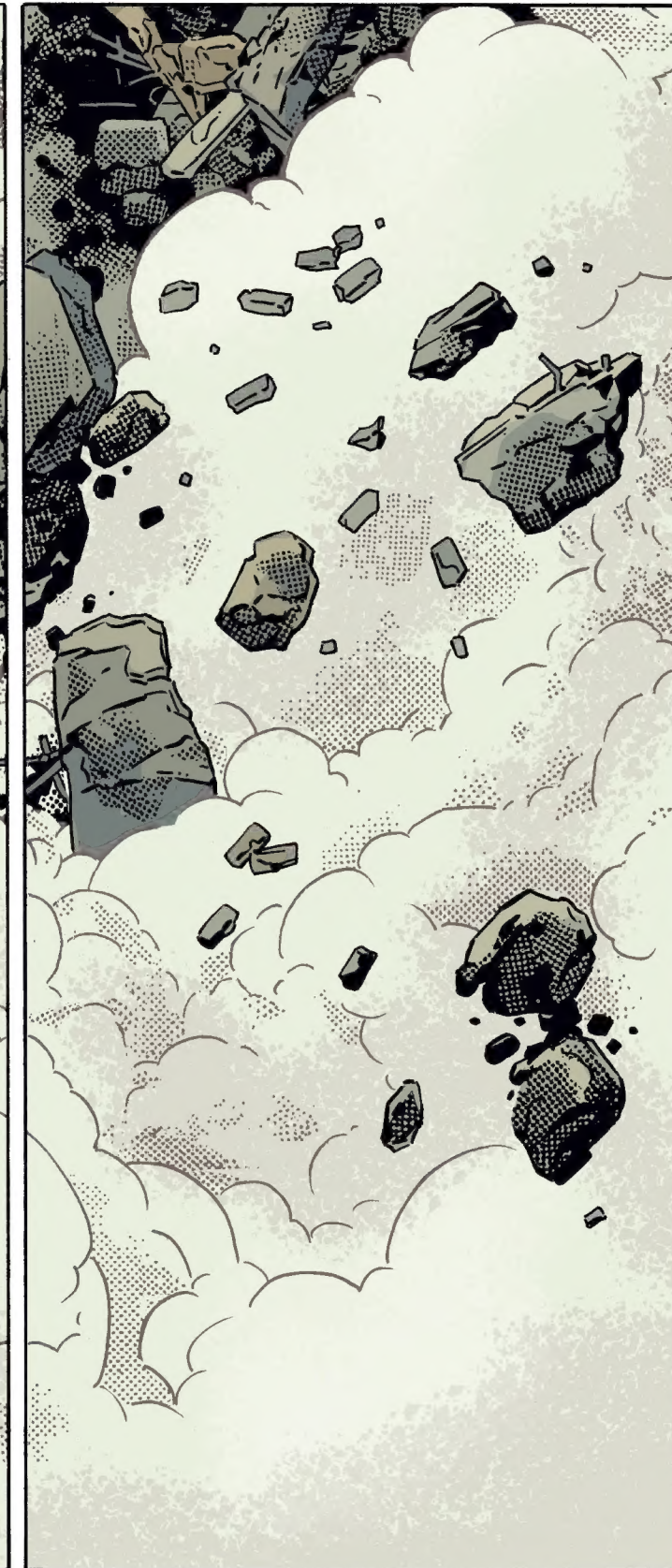
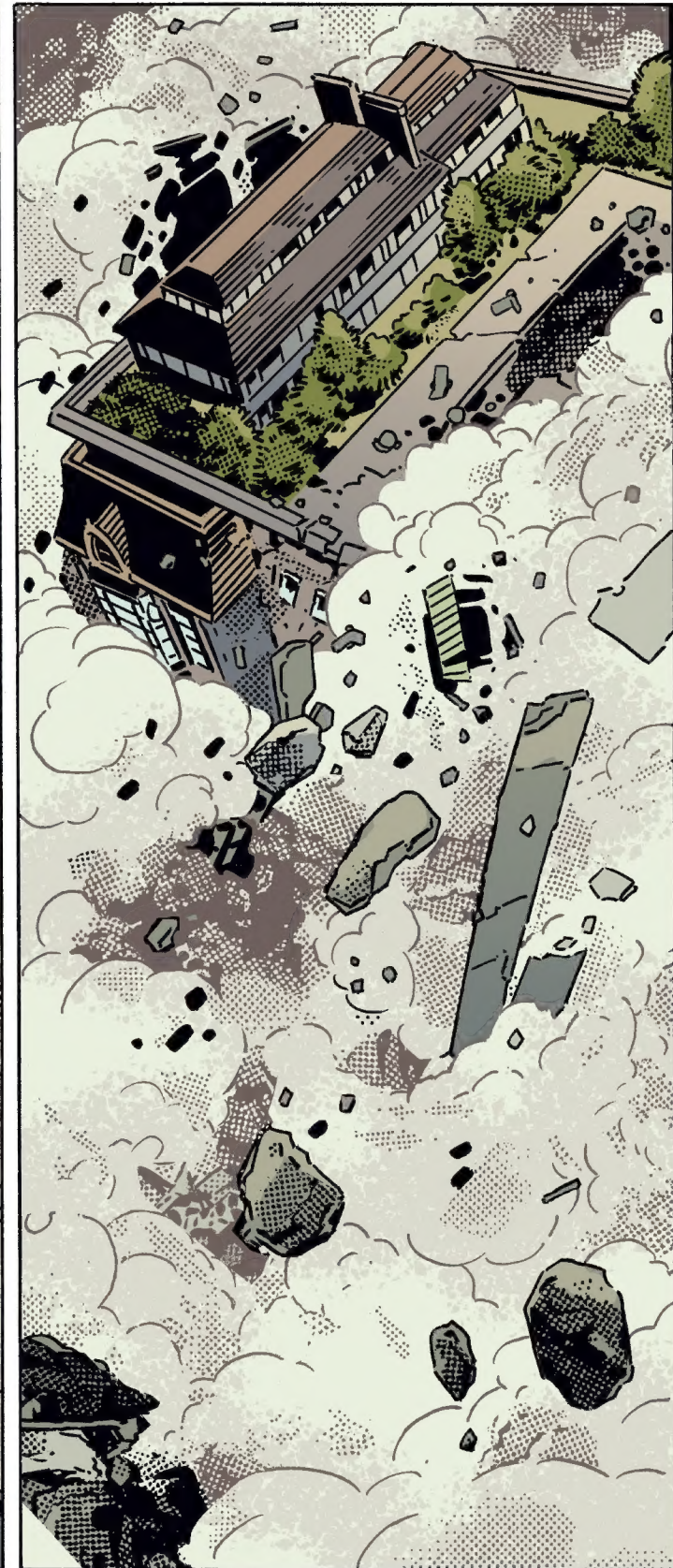
NOW, POPS, FESS UP. NO, YOU DIDN'T. OR AT LEAST NOT SOON ENOUGH TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. IT WAS MORE OF AN "I TOLD YOU SO," WASN'T IT?



WHEN CAN WE GO BACK IN?

GOOD QUESTION.





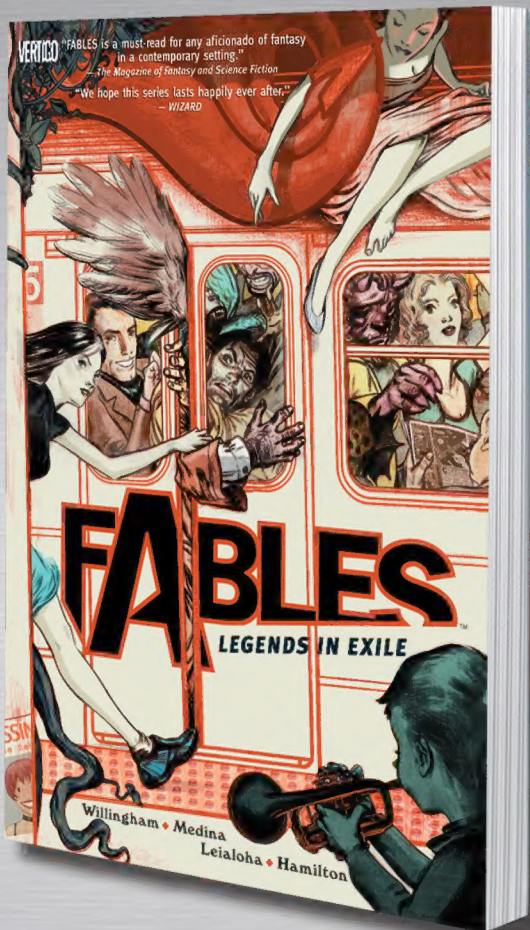
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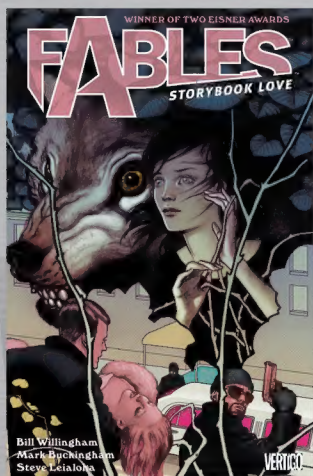
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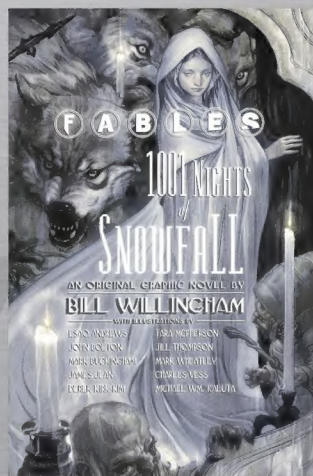
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